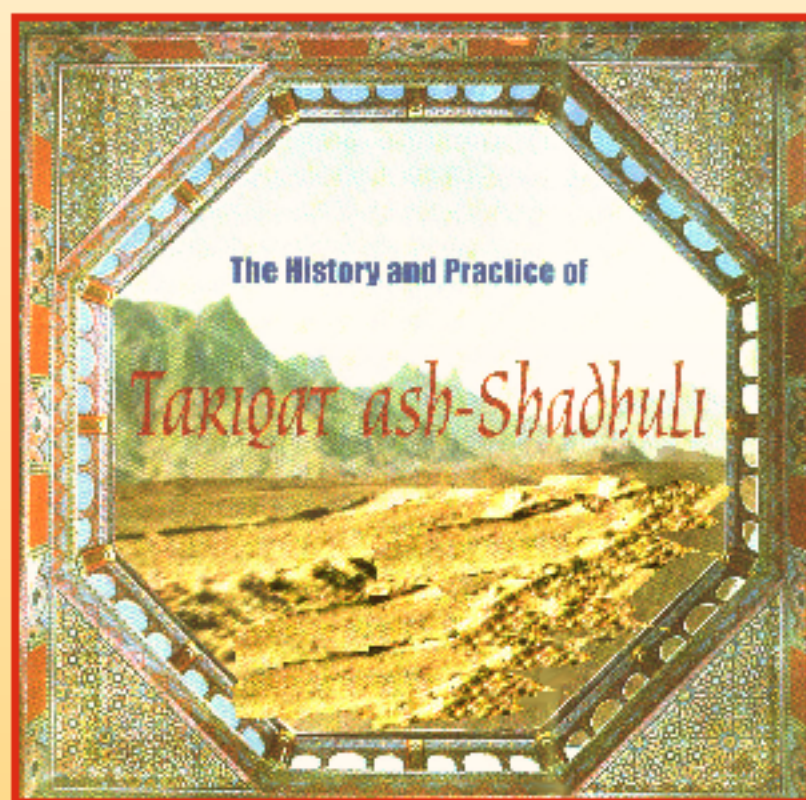


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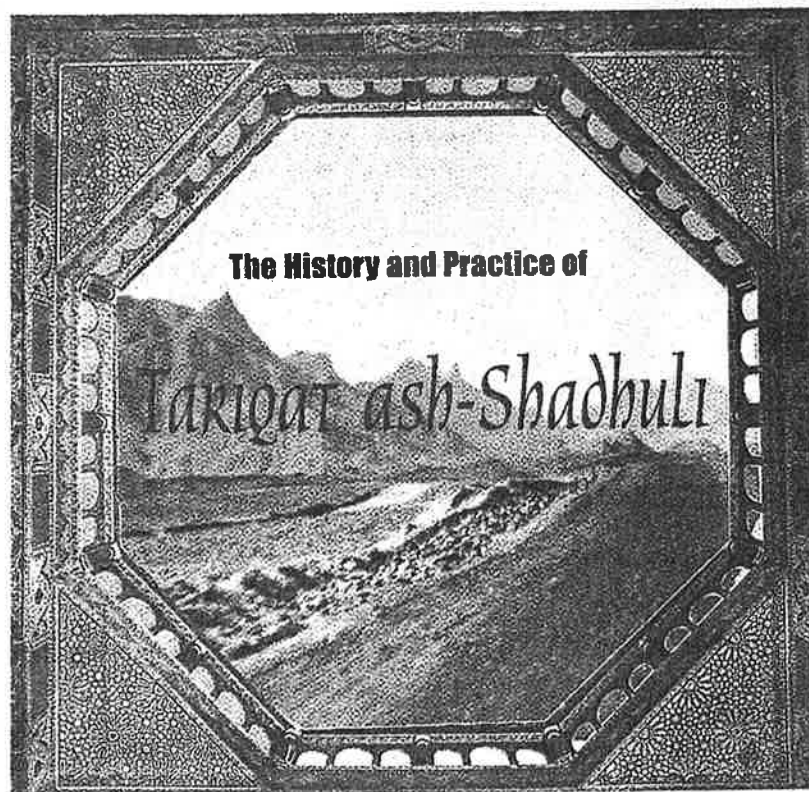


*on the road to Humaythira & the Magam of Sidi Abu'l Hasan*

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On the road to al-Humaythira in eastern Egypt, where Sidi 'Ali Abu-l-Hasan ash-Shadhuli is buried

## Part One of a Two-Part Article

by Shaykh Abdullah  
Nooruddeen Durkee

**P**raise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, Who, through His Eternal Word, does not cease to be praised: We further bear witness that our liege-lord Muhammad ﷺ is the Perfected (*'insanu-l-kamil*) Worshipper (*'abdu-l-llah*), His Slave and the Final Prophet and Messenger chosen from the seed of pure nobility, selected from a family of honor whose virtues falls short of describing.

The authenticating line of transmission of this Tariqat ash-Shadhuliyyah stems from the Prophet ﷺ to his spiritual successor (*khalifah*) Imam Ali, and then splits into three lines, headed by Imam al-Hasan ibn Ali, Imam al-Husayn ibn Ali, and Sidi Hasan al-Basri.

### The Silsila of Early Shadhuliyyah Shuyukh (Chain of Shaykhs)

The Hassani line descends to Sidi Abd ar-Rahman al-'Attar, whilst the Husayni line and the Hasan al-Basri line join in Sidi

Ma'ruf al Kharkhi. These are followed by Sidi as-Saqati, after whom the line splits into the Nurriyyah line, terminating in Sidi Yallanur ad-Dukkali, and the Junaydi line, terminating in Sidi Muhammad al-Daqqaq. These two were the teachers of Sidi Abu Madyan al-Ghawth, who, along with Sidi Abd ar-Rahman al-'Attar, taught Sidi Ibn Harazim and Sidi Abd as-Salam ibn Mashish, who taught Sidi 'Ali Abu-l-Hasan ash-Shadhuli, the eponymous founder of the tariqat [593-655/1196-1258].

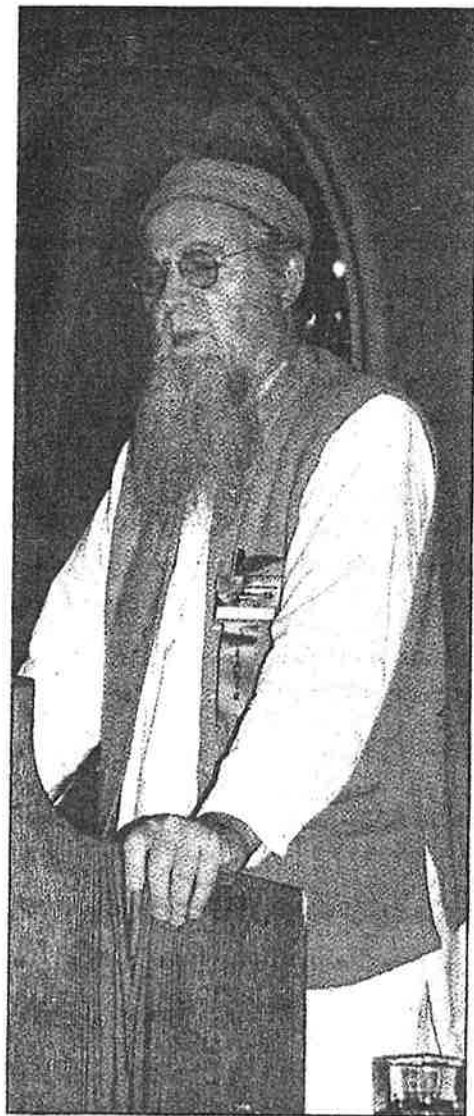
His *bay'ah* marked, as he said, "the end of my beginning."

The line then proceeds on through his khalifah Sidi Abu-l-Abbas al Mursi and then splits again into what may be thought of as the line of written transmission,

which comes down through Sidi Ibn 'Ata' Illah as-Sakandari, and the line of oral transmission, which descends through Sidi Yaqut al-Arsh-al Habashi.

There is also a third more overtly Maghribi line stemming from an early murid, Sidi Abdullah al-Habibi of Tunisia. This descends to the present time through Sidi Muhammad al Jazuli, author of the *Dala'il al-Khayrat*. A case can be made that this line, often termed "Madyani" rather than "Shadhuli", represents the earlier teachings of the Shaykh, whilst the lines of Sidi ibn Ata 'Illah and Sidi Yaqut represent the later and fully articulated dimensions of the Shaykh's final Alexandrian and long haul travel teachings.

The author inherits through all of these lines but his practice is mainly informed by the teachings transmitted in Alexandria, which is where the tariqat became a *ta'ifah* (organization) and spread throughout the wider world.



Shaykh Nooruddeen Durkee at the 2nd International Islamic Unity Conference.

### The Spread of Shadhuliyyah

Branches exist throughout the entire Muslim world but are found mainly in Egypt; North Saharan and East Africa; Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, the Hijaz and Hadramawt; and, via the monsoon trade and Hajj routes, in the Malaysian archipelago, as well as the coastal lands of Africa south from Lamu and Mombassa to Dar as-Salam, and the islands of Zanzibar, the Comoros and Mauritius in the Indian Ocean.

Circles of Shadhuli may also be found in Turkey, India and, at least in terms of doctrinal influence, in Iran. Some of these circles, however, seem to be only nominally Shadhuli in terms of practice, and the silsila often tends to be Uwaysi, with the result that some shuyukh teach more on the basis of inspiration and personal affinity to Shaykh Abu-l Hasan than on the basis of the traditional Shadhuli means and methods.

The Shadhuli as a tariqat and ta'ifah in general has the reputation of being very shari'ah oriented. Many of its shuyukh were members of the 'ulama prior to becoming 'sufis'. It is also heavily involved in da'wah and social service [*khidmat*], which in Egypt most often takes the form of preparing and serving food to the poor, especially during the holy month of Ramadan and during the times of the mawlid.

Jihad, both inner and outer, is enjoined upon all members following the example of Shaykh Abu-l-Hasan who, along with many of the well known 'ulama and awlia (saints) of his time, was in the ranks of the mujahidin fighting in the front line at the Battle of Mansurah when, by the Qadr of Allah ﷻ (Divine Power), the Crusaders under King Louis of France were defeated and captured in their attempt to invade Egypt in 1250 C.E..

### Practitioners and Authorized Teachers

It should be emphasized here, in spite of some recent claims to the contrary, that there is no tradition of any such office as a 'Grand Master' among the Shadhuli, though there have been, and are, many luminous and well-known shuyukh. Neither is there a tradition of large social organizations. Rather, the Shadhuli tradition has almost always been transmitted by hundreds of independent and entirely autonomous shuyukh, each with their *ijazat* [permission to teach] signed by their own immediate shaykh, who have purposely scattered, often to obscure villages and towns of the Muslim world as well as to the non-Muslim frontiers, to transmit the way to those seekers whom Allah ﷻ sends. Historically most people drawn to the way of Shaykh Abu-l-Hasan come from the professional, teaching and administrative classes.

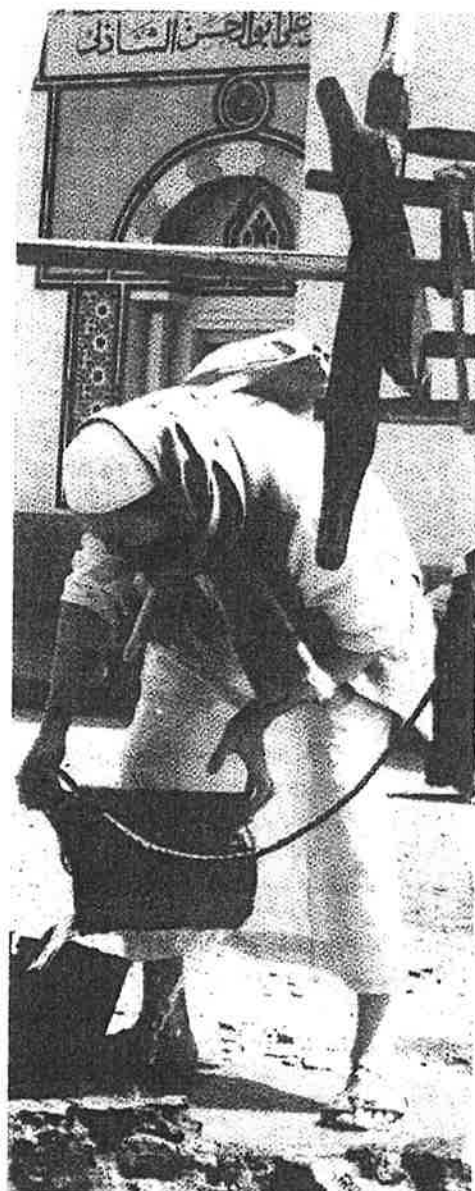
### The origin of *tasawwuf* is in the station of *al-ihsan*.

Exceptions exist, especially during the past 200 years in areas that were subject to the forces of colonization which radically skewed certain patterns in the traditional world. In that period some Shadhuli shuyukh developed a large cadre of often many thousands of muridun, muqaddimah

and local shuyukh, with widely spread sub-branches. Examples of this include the branch in North Africa that was brought into being by Shaykh al-Darqawi; the branch of Shaykh al-Haddad originating in Hadramawt and the Hijaz which spread into East and coastal south Africa; and the branch of Sidi Salamah ar-Radi in Egypt.

### Shadhuliyyah in Practice

For the most part what we now think of as the school of Abu-l-Hasan ash-Shadhuli manifested in Alexandria--and it is important to comprehend that whilst it was thoroughly rooted in Qur'an and Sunnah--the understanding of what that means is multi-dimensional. For as much as there is a Junaydi dimension to the tariqat so too



Pouring water from the well of Sidi 'Ali Abu-l-Hasan ash-Shadhuli at al-Humaythira.



The grave of Sidi 'Ali Abu-l-Hasan ash-Shadhuli

there is a Nuriyyah dimension, which is exclusively oral and stems from the reality of the *tajalliyyah rahmaniyya* in which one knows Truth without being outwardly taught [*min ladunna 'ilma*]. (al-Kahf 18:65)

Of all the Ways there are two: Travelling [*suluk*] and Attraction [*jadhb*].

Indeed the Shaykh said, "Of all the Ways there are two: the Way of Travelling [*suluk*] and the Way of Attraction [*jadhb*]. Our way is the way of *jadhb*. Our beginning is their end and their beginning is our completion." A later shaykh, Sidi Ahmad az-Zurruq, commented on this saying that, "The variety in a branch is due to the variety of its origin. The origin of *tasawwuf* is in the station of *al-'ihsan* and it is split into two: 'to worship Allah as though you see Him' and 'knowing that though you do not see Him, but that He sees you.' The first is the way of the knower and the second is the way of the seeker. The folk of the Shadhuli revolve around the first and the folk of al-Ghazali revolve around the latter."

Of the Way of *Jadhb* or Attraction, Sidi Ibn Ata 'Illah as-Sakandari, a successor of Sidi Abu-l-'Abbas al Mursi, said, "Do not think that the attracted one has no path. He has a path, but it has been folded up [*bi-tawa*] by the solicitude of Allah so that his way has been speedily expedited."

The Shaykh himself said, "If anyone spends three days with me and doesn't get it, let them go elsewhere." He also said of his way, "If anyone finds a sweeter spring than this, let them drink from it."

In truth it pains me to have to write fleetingly of so many events and teachings, of the heavy opposition Sidi 'Ali Abu-l-Hasan endured from the extremists of his time, of the many circles of remembrance that were formed and the deep transformations that took place. May the Shaykh forgive me for this brevity, for it is not by my own choice.

### Life Sketch of Sidi 'Ali Abu-l-Hasan

BY WAY OF A VERY BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE SHAYKH (AND I URGE THE INTERESTED READER TO PROCURE A COPY OF OUR BOOK ON THE MADRASAH SHADHDULIYYAH FOR MORE COMPLETE DETAILS), IT IS KNOWN THAT SIDI 'ALI ABU-L-HASAN WAS BORN IN THE VILLAGE OF AL-GHUMARAH IN THE RIF MOUNTAINS IN WHAT IS NOW MOROCCO, TOWARD THE END THE 6TH HURI CENTURY. HE WAS FROM THE FAMILY OF THE PROPHET ﷺ FROM THE LINEAGE OF IMAM AL-HUSAYN عليه السلام ON HIS MOTHER'S SIDE AND, SOME SAY, FROM THE LINEAGE OF IMAM AL-HASAN عليه السلام ON HIS FATHER'S SIDE.

HIS EARLY EDUCATION WAS AT THE HANDS OF HIS MOTHER, FATHER AND THE LOCAL IMAM. WHEN HE REACHED PUBERTY, OR THEREABOUTS, HE WAS SENT TO THE MADRASAH OF QARAWWIYIN IN AL-FAS (FEZ) TO STUDY SHAR'AH UNDER SIDI 'ABDULLAH IBN HARAZIM, TO WHOM HE LATER GAVE HIS FIRST *BAY'AH* AS A TALIB IN THE WAY OF ALLAH ﷺ.

IT WAS DURING HIS STUDIES IN AL-FAS THAT HE WAS INSPIRED TO SEEK THE QUTB [POLE OF THE SAINTS] OF THE AGE, AND, IN PURSUIT OF THIS GOAL, TOOK HIS FIRST GREAT JOURNEY TO THE EAST, TRAVELING SOME 3000 MILES BY FOOT, SHIP AND CAMEL CARAVAN TO REACH AL-IRAQ. THERE, ACCORDING TO HIS BIOGRAPHER AS-

SABBAGH, 'ALI ABU-L-HASAN GAVE HIS *BAY'AH* TO SHAYKH ABU-L-FATH AL-WASITI, THE KHALIFAH OF SHAYKH AHMAD AR-RIFA'I, IN BATA'IH AMONG THE MARSHES OF SOUTHERN IRAQ.

AFTER A NUMBER OF TRIALS IN WHICH HE WAS INITIALLY REJECTED BY THE SHAYKH, HE WAS FINALLY ACCEPTED BY THE QUTB OF THE TIME AND, AS A MATURE SEEKER, GAVE SHAYKH IBN-MASHISH HIS *BAY'AH* WHICH MARKED, AS HE SAID, "THE END OF MY BEGINNING." ABU-L-HASAN WAS DIRECTED TO A MOUNTAIN IN TUNIS NEAR A VILLAGE CALLED SHADHILA, WHERE THE SHAYKH SAID HE SHOULD LIVE UNTIL HE RECEIVED AN INSPIRATION. THIS WOULD BE HIS SIGNAL TO GO TO THE CAPITAL OF TUNIS WHERE HE WOULD BE OPPOSED BY ZEALOTS UNTIL AN EVENT TRANSPIRED WHICH WOULD MOVE HIM TO THE EAST, WHERE HE, IN TURN, WOULD "BECOME THE QUTB."

THE FINAL WORDS OF THE SHAYKH TO ABU-L-HASAN WERE, "YA 'ALI, KNOW THAT ALLAH IS ALLAH AND PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE. THE REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH WILL LIVE IN YOUR HEART. THE GUIDANCE OF ALLAH WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU. DO NOT REFER TO PEOPLE OTHER THAN AS ALLAH COMMANDS YOU. REFRAIN FROM DEPENDENCE ON THEM AND KEEP YOUR HEART FROM INCLINING TO THEM. YOUR SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGNTY [*Wilayah*] HAS BEEN PERFECTED BY ALLAH."

HE FOLLOWED THE INSTRUCTIONS OF HIS SHAYKH AND EVERYTHING HAPPENED ACCORDINGLY UNTIL IN TIME, AND AFTER MANY UNVEILINGS, STRUGGLES, RETREATS AND ADVANCES, HE CAME TO LIVE IN ALEXANDRIA ON THE SHORE OF THE MID-EARTH SEA. THERE HE ENTERED INTO THE FULLNESS HIS SHAYKH HAD SEEN IN HIM AND BECAME THE POLE OF THE PEOPLE IN THAT TIME. I SHOULD ALSO MENTION, VERY IMPORTANTLY HERE, THAT THE SHAYKH LEFT BEHIND, IN TUNIS, SIDI 'ABDULLAH IBN SALAMAH AL-HABIBI, WHO SOME MAGHRIBI SHADHULI REGARD AS HIS VERY FIRST KHALIFAH.◊

*Part Two of this article, which will appear 'inshallah in our next issue, will examine in greater detail the teachings of Shaykh Abu-l-Hasan ash-Shadhuli, and explore the many manifestations of his way in the present time and place.*



# The History and Practice of *Tariqat ash-Shadhuliyyah*

PART TWO OF A TWO-PART ARTICLE



By Shaykh Nouradeen Durkee

In the first part of this article for TMM we discussed the lineage of the Shadhuli, some aspects of the life of the Shaykh including his teachers and some of his students. We concluded by discussing the way of *Jadhb* [attraction by Allah] and *Suluk* [travelling to Allah] noting: Indeed the Shaykh said, "Of all the Ways there are two: the Way of Travelling [*suluk*] and the Way of Attraction [*jadhb*]. Our way is the way of *jadhb*. Our beginning is their end and their beginning is our completion." A later shaykh, Sidi Ahmad az-Zurruq, commented on this saying that, "The variety in a branch is due to the variety of its origin. The origin of *tasawwuf* is in the station of al-'ihsan and it is split into two: 'to worship Allah as though you saw Him' and 'knowing that though you do not see Him He sees you.' The first is the way of the knower and the second is the way of the seeker. The folk of the Shadhuli revolve around the first and the folk of al-Ghazali revolve around the latter."

## The two ways

Of the Way of *Jadhb* or Attraction, Sidi Ibn Ata 'Illah as-Sakandari, a successor of Sidi Abu-l-'Abbas al Mursi, said, "Do not think that the attracted one has no path. He has a path, but it has been folded up [*bi-tawa*] by the solicitude of Allah so that his way has been speedily expedited."

The Shaykh himself said, "If anyone spends three days with me and doesn't get it, let them go elsewhere." He also said of his way, "If anyone finds a sweeter spring than this, let them drink from it." His is the way beyond all forms of spiritual fascism.

Please realize we are not denying here the necessity for training (*tarbiyyah*) which is what the Shaykh does and did.

There was no aspect of *tarbiyyah* that the Shaykh did not touch on: sincerity [*al-ikhlās*], intention [*al-niyyah*], seclusion [*al-khalwah*], struggle, inner and outer [*al-jihad*], service and worship [*al-'ubudiyyah*], obedience [*at-ta'at*], scrupulousness [*al-wara'*], abstinence [*az-zuhd*], reliance [*at-tawakkul*], contentment [*ar-rida'*], love [*al-mahabbah*], and their like. He also taught the Qur'anic sciences [*qira'*, *hifdh* and *tafsir*], supplication [*du'a*], remembrance [*dhikr*], recollection [*muraqabah*], and the practice of presence [*al-hadrah*].

In the realm of *adab* and *akhlāq* he stressed the need for transparency and the cessation of self direction.

An idea of what is meant by transparency can be gleaned from a statement of Shaykh 'Umar 'Abdullah of the Comoro Islands, when he said one day as we were getting into a taxi in Jeddah, "If we were better Muslims they would never even know that we are Sufis."

Regarding the falling away of self-direction Sidi Ibn Ata 'Illah wrote succinctly, "Rest yourself from self direction. For what Someone Else has carried out on your behalf you must not yourself undertake to do."



Dr. Abdu-l-Halim Mahmud (with turban), former rector of al-Azhar University, with Shaykh Ibrahim Battawi, shaykh of the author (left of Dr. Mahmud).

Here the reader should know that neither Shaykh Abu-l-Hasan nor Shaykh Abu-l-'Abbas ever wrote a book.

When asked, "Where are your books?", Shaykh Abu-l-Hasan said, "My students are my books." He also said, "All the words in all the books are but a few scattered drops from the ocean of realisation." Indeed it wasn't until a generation later that Sidi Ibn Ata 'Illah, the Maliki jurist and the Cairene khali-fah of Sidi Mursi abu-l-'Abbas, wrote a thorough exposition of the doctrine, though earlier students had transcribed bits and pieces from lessons and the *ahzab* [litany], *adhkar* [pl. of dhikr] and *awrad* [pl. of wurd, daily recitations] of the Sidi Abu-l-Hasan were, and continue to be, widely recited and memorized.

What is now known of the mature teaching of the Shaykh stems mainly from the written works of Shaykh Ibn Ata 'Illah, whilst the oral teachings handed down in the line of Sidi Yaqut al-Arsh form a further dimension of the teaching, both passing through Sidi Abu-l-'Abbas al-Mursi.

### Oral teachings

We cannot speak but in passing of that oral transmission but we will let this slip from our fingers. One time the Shaykh was questioned about Love by a student who had taken the path "to heart" and asked, "Now that I have come to love, tell me what is the drink of love, what is the cup of love, who is the cup-bearer, what is the tasting, what is the drinking, what is repletion, what is intoxication and what is sobriety?"

Our Shaykh said, "The drink of love is the light radiating from the beauty of the Beloved. The cup is the distillation of subtle mercy [*lutf*] which brings that light into contact with the lips of the heart. The cup-bearer is He who befriends the greatest of the elect and righteous from among His worshippers [*'abced*]. He is Allah, the one who knows the capacities and affairs of His friends. If to anyone there is disclosed that beauty; if they enjoy it for a breath or two, and then the veil is dropped, they are the yearning 'taster'.

If one continues for an hour or more one is the 'drinker'. If the experience becomes continuous and the drink lasts until all ones veins and being are suffused with the treasured lights of Allah, then that is repletion. Sometimes one becomes unconscious of sense and mental perceptions so that one knows not what is said or heard and that is intoxication. Sometimes the cup circulates among the lovers, states differ, and they are turned back to *dhikr*, to *ahwal* - states, to *furud* - obligations. They are not veiled in spite of having drunk as much as they could and that is sobriety, the broadening of vision and the increase of works. So by the stars of knowledge and the moon of unity they are guided across the night, and by the sun of spiritual knowledge they obtain light. *They are the partisans of Allah — and truly the partisans of Allah [hizbullah] are successful.*" [Mujadalah 58:22]

### Written teachings

This is a taste from the oral teachings. The written teachings can best be tasted in the *Hikam* of Ibn Ata 'Illah as translated by the late Shadhuli teacher and translator, Sidi Abdu-l-Jabbar Dr. Victor Danner. For anyone interested in the pure pith of the teachings of Shaykh Abu-l-Hasan this book is an absolute must as is, *The Falling Away of Self Direction*, now under translation by S. N. Ahmed for Fons Vitae.

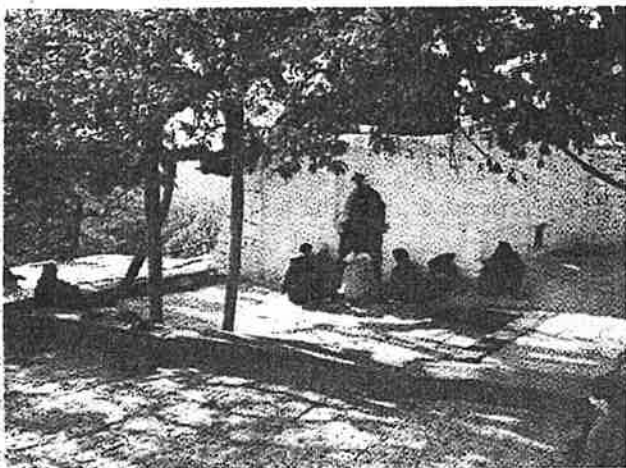
*The Key to Salvation*, translated by M. Danner-Fadae, gives some idea of the procedure and practices of the Shadhuli Way but without a living Shaykh to explain them these books are in the end nothing but empty words.

The *Hikam*, like the *Mawaqif* of al-Nifari, exists in another dimension. It is a thing in itself and works deeply on one, especially when repeatedly read over many years as is *The Meaning of Man* by Sidi 'Ali al-Jamal, Allah sanctify their secret and all mentioned.

Certain strands emerge out of these readings and the teachings. The first is the absolute insistence that Qur'an and Sunnah are in Truth not only the basis but the very means of the spiritual life. Along these lines Shaykh Abu'l Hasan said, "If your own insights [*kashf*] contradict Qur'an or Sunnah then hold on to the Qur'an and Sunnah and leave your personal insights aside. Allah, the Exalted, vouchsafed the infallibility of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, but *kashf* is not so warranted, neither inspiration [*ilham*] or vision [*ru'yah*]."

Following this thread it is easy to understand how it came to be that the late Shaykh of Azhar, Dr. Abdu-l-Halim Mahmud, was also a teaching shaykh of the Shadhuli order who affirmed the values of *tasawwuf* to a society which after colonization, revolution and war, was in need of a deeper understanding of Islam.

Among his many works are the biographies of



Shaykh Abu-I-Hasan and his khalifah Sidi Abu-I-Abbas al-Mursi which are presently translated and awaiting publication in Volume Two: *Origins of the Shadhuliyyah*.

The Shaykh dressed well but never conspicuously, his object being disappearance, though on festival days [*al-`idayn*] and the festivities associated with the mawlid of our blessed Prophet ﷺ he would appear handsomely dressed riding one of the beautiful horses which he raised and trained on his farm outside Alexandria.

### The Shaykh's passing and successorship

His love of horses opens out another dimension of his teaching which involves long distance journeying. In this connection he took students on the Umrah and the Hajj every other year. He also had a habit of, from time to time, suddenly leaving family and students for a couple of weeks at a time to disappear on horse-back into the open country side on long solitary rides. When asked he always said he went "nowhere". There is so much to say and so little room to say it in but I must, at least, mention his blessed death.

He was in his 60's and it was in a year upon which he took the muridun for Hajj. He died in the desert of Aydhah which is three days by camel from the Nile at Idfu and two days further until you hit the Red Sea.

He had a good intimation that he was going to die, because he had ordered that a shovel and shroud be packed when they were preparing for that particular Hajj. When they reached the mid-way point, which is the well at a place called Humaythirah, it was clear he was going. He spoke to all of the students and enjoined upon them the reading of *Hizb ul-Babr* [*The Litany* or *Orison of the Sea*] saying, "Teach it to your children for in it is the greatest name of Allah [*ismu-l-`adham*]." He talked in private with Sidi Abu-I-Abbas al-Mursi and told all of the students, "When I am dead look to Abu-I-Abbas for he is the khalifah to succeed me."

In this context it is important to understand that this practice of publicly announcing one's successor[s] or *khulafa'* as well as giving them a written '*ijazah*' (license) is a practice of the Shadhuliyyah down to the present

day. Very rarely is *ru'yah* (vision) or *ilham* (inspiration) accepted as a substitution for public proclamation and a signed '*ijazah*'.

Between sunset and dusk the Shaykh asked one of his murids named Muhammad to bring him a jug of water from the well. Muhammad said, "Sidi, it is salty." The Shaykh said, "My intention is other than what you think." So Muhammad brought him a jug of water from the well. The Shaykh drank some, rinsed his mouth and then spat into the jug, saying, "Put it back in the well." He put it back and the water turned sweet, fresh and abundant by the permission of Allah ﷻ. To this day the water of that well is sweet.

"The Shaykh passed the night orienting himself to Allah in the recitation of dhikr. I heard him saying, '*Allaabi, Allaabi, Allaabi*' and when the Fajr time arrived he was still. Thinking he was asleep we shook him and found him dead, may Allah have mercy on him. We called Sidi Abu-I-Abbas and he washed him and we wrapped him and prayed over him and buried him in Humaythirah and continued on for Hajj."

This, and more, is all recorded in *The Pearl of Secrets and the Gem of the Devoted Ones* by ibn Sabbagh and was related by Shaykh Sharaf ad-Din, son of Sidi Madi bin Sultan.

### The Shadhuliyya tariqat today

The Shadhuli in the present appear to be a diverse lot but if you look closely you will generally find they are very active on many levels in the teaching and propagation of Islam [and sufism which is at its heart] in line with the hadith, "A single learned Muslim is harder on the Shaytan than a thousand worshippers".

Among some notable westerners of the present time, many of whom returned to Islam through the open door that is tassawuf, are men like Shaykh Abdul Qadir as-Sufi, now called al-Murabit, who through his training of murids, writing and political analysis helped break the chains of the orientlists and restored our awareness of a vibrant sufism and its inextricable connection to Islam, not as an abstraction but as a living reality.

Or Shaykh Nuh Ha Mim Keller who has, in his great translation of *The Reliance of the Traveller*, provided the community with the vital means to lay to rest so many of the false arguments of the Wahhabis and the pseudo-Salafis. As Allah ﷻ says, "Are those who know and those who don't know equal?" [Zumar 39:9]

On another front if you travel to al-Madinah and look at some of the work that has been recently carried out on the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ, you should know that much of it was designed and executed by members of a branch of the Shadhuli who, in the accord with the doctrine of transparency, desire to remain transparent.

It was to these same architects and designers that Islamic authorities in Central Asia turned when they

needed to preserve and repair their traditional madrasahs after years of communist neglect; again, when authorities finally woke up to the need to preserve crumbling libraries in the heart of the Muslim world, they turned to members of the Shadhuli orders. In any number of major universities, both East and West, you will find the Shadhuliyyah teaching; sometimes with Eastern names sometimes with Western names.

Year after year, out of the many students who pass through their classes, there are a few who, sensing something 'different' in their teachers, begin to ask questions and wind up returning to Islam, again, most often through the open door of Sufism.

Two well known elders of this branch of the Shadhuli school are Sidi Dr Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Sidi Abu Bakr Siraju-d-Deen Dr. Martin Lings, who as educators, and authors of numerous works on Islam, Qur'an, *sirah* of the Prophet ﷺ, tassawuf, culture, science, art and aesthetics have helped open the eyes of many generations of Muslims and non-Muslims to both the universal and particular dimensions of Islam and Sufism. Their very lives serve as a beautiful example [*'uswatun bassanah*] of what it might be to be a "sufi".

Yet another shining example of the men [*rijal*] of the Shadhuli way is Sultan 'Abdu-l-Hamid II, student of Shaykh Muhammad al-Madani of the Madaniyyah-Darqawiyyah, may Allah ﷻ sanctify their secret.

I cannot begin to enumerate the many recent luminaries of the Shadhuli way some of whom, like Shaykh ad-Darqawi, Shaykh al-Alawi, Shaykh ibn al-Habib, Shaykh Ahmad Ibn 'Ajiba, Shaykh al-Haddad, Shaykh al-Fayturi, Shaykh Maliki al-Alawi, Shaykh Ali Nooruddeen Yashruti and his daughter, Shaykhah Fatimah Yashruti, Shaykh Hazim Abu Ghazalah, Shaykh Muhammad al-Jamal, Shaykh Abdul-Wahid Yahya, Shaykh 'Isa Nooruddeen Ahmad, Shaykh Umar Abdullah, Shaykh Abd al-Wakil Durubi, Shaykh Abdull-Jalil Qassem, Shaykh Hassan Abbas Zaki, Shaykh Yusuf Rifa'i, Shaykh Hasan at-Tihami, Shaykhah Hajjah Zakkiyya, Shaykh Ali Komi and others, known and unknown, may Allah ﷻ sanctify their secret, who have had such a strong influence here in the West either directly or through their *kebulafah* and students.

### My Shaykh

My own shaykh, Sidi Ibrahim Muhammad al-Battawi, may Allah give him long life and good health, could serve as a fairly typical example of how one contemporary Shadhuli shaykh conducts his life and teaching.

In accord with the instructions of his shaykh, Sidi Salama ar-Radi, who named him Shaykh al-Afandi whilst he was still in his twenties, he concentrated, first at Cairo University and later at al-Azhar, where he taught the works of al-Ghazali for twenty-five years, on teaching the many foreign students drawn to these insti-

tutions.

Out of each yearly intake he would identify a few receptive students and begin to teach them privately at the zawiyah a few blocks from the Azhar. He taught, and still teaches, through the traditional method in which the student reads from one of the great books of the Islamic canon to the shaykh and the shaykh orally comments on and opens out the meaning of the text for the student. For almost forty years now he has conducted the *hadrah* (dhikr performed standing) on the eve of al-Jouma in that same zawiyah. On the Jouma he often gives the sermon (*khutbah*) in the masjid of Sidi Ibn Ata'illah under the Muqattim Hills in Cairo or wherever else he may be invited to speak. Following in the footsteps of Sidi Abu-l-Hasan, he travels with his friends and students on yearly trips to Makkah and al-Madinah. He himself has personally built and helped build a number of masajid, most often in raw new neighborhoods of Cairo. These masajid almost always include a clinic and a small madrasah with rooms for students. I should mention, though he never would, that every penny he ever earned as a professor was always given back to his poorer students, of whom I was privileged to be one. He earns his living as a publisher and seller of Islamic books and also as an importer and seller of agricultural and irrigation machinery. The food on his table comes from his family farm in a small village in the Delta and is always fresh and always *halal*. I love to walk with him at dawn to the masjid for Fajr prayer.

He is married with seven children, all of whom are educated and work for a living. His sons mainly work in education, publishing and printing. His eldest daughter is a teacher trained at the Azhar and his youngest is studying multi-lingual translation at Azhar.

Of his many students, many return home to serve as 'ulama' and teachers in their own countries. This is how the way is spread all over the earth. He is, as are all the purified shuyukh, may Allah be pleased with them all and sanctify their secret, a link in a living chain that is completed when you put your hand in the hand of the man who put his hand in the hand of the man who put his hand in the hand of the man a of whom Allah ﷻ says, "*Those who swear allegiance to you swear allegiance to Allah; the hand of Allah is over their hands. The one who breaks [his oath] breaks it only to the loss of his own self. And whoever keeps his oath with Allah, upon him there shall be [bestowed] an immense reward.*" (al-Fath 48:10)

In closing I should mention that Shadhuli is a name given to Sidi Abu'l-Hasan by his Lord whom he heard say in a *ru'yah*, "I have extracted you to Me." *sha dbu li*. And that's the way it is.

Anything I have written that is of use is from my Lord, and any mistakes are my own. And Allah knows best - *Wa Allahu 'alim.*◊